



FEMA

Desoto Memorial Hospital Recovers from Hurricane Charley

Arcadia, FL – Since its construction in 1968, Desoto Memorial Hospital has provided uninterrupted medical care for the surrounding community – even during the 2004 onslaught of Hurricane Charley.

When Charley hit, Desoto County received extensive damage. The hospital was in no way spared. Part of the roof peeled back, exposing patients and critical equipment to wind-driven rain. More than 35 windows shattered from the force of the high winds and the well-manicured grounds were strewn with debris.

With ingenuity and perseverance, however, the staff maintained operations during the hurricane, providing crucial life-preserving services when community need was at its greatest. In response to the sudden and severe nature of the storm, hospital staff moved patients down a stairwell to the safety of the building's interior and utilized the boardroom as an emergency room.

With the benefit of active congressional support, the USDA provided a \$20-million loan – the largest such award ever made by the agency. Hurricane Charley caused an estimated \$2.3-million in damages to the hospital. The size of the loan permitted not just restoration, but also building expansion and enhancements, with mitigation to strengthen and protect against future storms.

The building project includes expansion of the emergency room and construction of a new patient tower that will increase available services. Improvements to the structure will include strengthened construction and hurricane-resistant laminated glass windows that resist penetration from windborne debris. Hurricane-resistant glass was chosen over shutters for the third floor windows because of limited accessibility. The new windows are graded to resist winds of 150 mph, well above the 120 mph minimum established by current building codes for the area. Supplemental funds for the project were obtained as well.

FEMA awarded a \$636,071 grant through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) to upgrade undamaged windows in the original structure to meet design standards of the new construction. The State of Florida, Department of Community Affairs administers the grant through a contractual arrangement with the hospital.



**DeSoto County,
Florida**



Quick Facts

Year:

2004

Sector:

Public

Cost:

\$20,636,032.00 (Actual)

Primary Activity/Project:

Retrofitting, Structural

Primary Funding:

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)